

### INTERESTING HISTORY.

The Northern Methodist Board of Bishops recently assigned Bishop Neely to New Orleans for his residence during the quadrennium. There are three small congregations of white people, two of them being of German constituency, and a large number of congregations, some thirteen or fourteen, of colored people connected with that body in New Orleans. On Bishop Neely's arrival he was given a public welcome in one of the white churches. A number of ministers took part in the welcome. Among them were several ministers of the Methodist Episcopal, South. In his response to the very cordial welcoming addresses, the Northern Bishop was tactless enough to claim that his church was the "mother church of all American Methodism, to which all the Methodists in the South used to belong."

Naturally this claim has greatly stirred our brethren of the Methodist Church, South. They most justly claim that their church was not a secession from another church, leaving the latter still the "mother church," but that the original church was peacefully and harmoniously divided into two separate but co-ordinate jurisdictions, both equally successors to the original body. In proof of this they cite the resolution of division, which was as follows:

"Resolved, by the delegates of the several annual conferences in general conference assembled, That should the annual conferences in the slave-holding States find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the Northern boundary of such connection: All societies, stations and conferences adhering to the church of the South, by a vote of a majority of the members of said societies, stations and conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the Southern church; and the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall in nowise attempt to organize churches or societies within the limits of the church, South, nor shall they attempt to exercise any pastoral oversight therein, it being understood that the ministry of the South reciprocally observe the same rule in relation to stations, societies and conferences adhering, by vote of a majority, to the Methodist Episcopal Church; provided also, that this rule shall apply only to societies, stations and conferences bordering on the line of division, and not to interior charges, which shall, in all cases, be left to the care of that church within whose territory they are situated."

This resolution and the division brought about under it was adopted by the General Conference of the one original body in 1844. A few years later the Northern wing repudiated it and declared that the division was a secession. Against this act of abrogation and declaration it is rightly charged that, after its separation, one of the divisions of the original body could not in common sense undo what the original body had done. And the matter having been carried into the Supreme Court, that court, in two distinct cases, declared the two churches to be co-ordinate and ordered common property to be divided between them accordingly.

All this claim on the part of our Southern brethren Bishop Neely characterizes as a dragging of matter

"from its burial in the dust of forgotten history." Exactly so. He has forgotten history else he might have spoken differently. He needs to be reminded of it. Had he remembered it a little better perhaps he would have made a pleasanter speech. Had his whole church remembered it better it would not have thrust itself so much, against the spirit and words of the original agreement, into places where by that agreement it was to keep out. It is quite needful for him and all of his order of mind and spirit to "bury" history and the compacts of the past, in order to support the notion of the "Americanism" of the so-called "mother church" and to uphold the charge of sectarianism against the other churches which adhere faithfully to the compact entered into, when the original church agreed to divide into two parts.

### THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT.

The sacraments of the Church must be, from the very nature of the case, universal in applicability and elements. The Church is universal. Its ordinances must be the same. All times, all peoples, all places, all classes, all conditions, must have the same ease and readiness of application in them. No rite or method or element in an ordinance intended for universal application will meet this end, which is not applicable to every individual who will believe in Christ, regardless of his health, his occupation, his climate, his abode, the season of the year, the nature of his work, or the position he holds. Any alleged provision that is not thus universally applicable has not the first requisite for a sacrament of a universal Church.

Hence, in ordering the sacraments of his Church, the Head of the Church chose the simplest elements, such as are universally found among men, and such as every believer may safely and easily use, and in such small quantities that neither climate, health, poverty nor any other consideration may prevent the believer from receiving them in safety and without needless sacrifice. Bread is universal. Wine may be had anywhere. A little water may be had even out in the heart of a desert.

The smallness of the quantity to be used guards against evil results to health or habit, as well as against useless expense or waste in the mere symbolism. If a pool or tank is needful for baptism, many believers would have to forego the blessed privilege of this act of obedience. The ghastly accounts which now and then appear of the immersion of dying people in a bath tub produce a feeling of revulsion. The cutting of the ice in winter that zealous professors may be dipped excites more ridicule for the unwisdom, than respect for the faith of the ardent subject. As God's word expressly forbids making a whole meal or a fete of the Lord's Supper, so by parity of reasoning, we may judge that he does not demand of the believer a whole bodily submergence in water to make the act legitimate baptism. A seal on a deed does not have to be enough wax and a die or stamp big enough to cover the whole document, but only just enough to bear witness to its genuineness and authority and to show that it has been approved by the proper official.